

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Rose Hill School

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| Full Name of the School | Rose Hill School |
| DCSF Number | 886/6013 |
| Registered Charity Number | 270158 |
| Address | Coniston Avenue, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9SY. |
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| Headmaster | Mr David Westcombe |
| Chair of Governing Council | Mr Alan Baker |
| Age Range | 3 to 13 |
| Gender | Mixed |
| Inspection Dates | 26th to 29th November 2007 |

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended with effect from January 2005 and May 2007.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Rose Hill is a co-educational, independent day school which provides a continuous education for pupils from age 3 to 13. Founded in 1832 in Tunbridge Wells as a boys' school, the school moved to its present location in 1966 and became a day school in the 1980s. The school is a charitable trust run by a governing council and the present headmaster took up his post in April 1998.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection, there were 303 pupils on roll, 178 boys and 125 girls aged between 3 and 13 years. Very few pupils have a minority ethnic heritage.
- 1.3 The school predominantly serves the area within a ten-mile radius. The pupils come mainly from professional home backgrounds. Entry to the Kindergarten and Reception classes is not formally selective, but entry is partially selective in Year 3. Each year contains a broad range of ability. Standardised tests indicate that, within a wide spectrum, overall ability on entry to the school is above average. If pupils are performing in line with their abilities, their results in national tests at age 11 will be above the average for all maintained primary schools. The school also attracts a minority of pupils who have the potential to achieve very highly. Thirty-one pupils receive extra support for their learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD). No pupils use English as an additional language and none holds a statement of special educational needs (SEN). A number of pupils leave at age 11 to enter local grammar schools or senior independent schools. Others continue to age 13 and are joined by pupils new to the school for Year 7 and Year 8. These pupils usually go on to their first choice of independent senior school.
- 1.4 Since the last inspection in 2001, there have been many changes. Considerable investment has been made in information and communication technology (ICT) in classrooms throughout the school and in a second ICT room. New library and teaching facilities have been built and also new changing rooms for boys and girls. A new centre for art, music and technology is being built with its opening planned for summer 2008. Communications with parents have been improved via the newsletter and the website. The number of staff and pupils has increased and the management team is larger. A school council has become well-established and there is a new outside classroom for children aged under five, along with new outdoor play equipment.
- 1.5 The school aims to enable every pupil to achieve his or her full academic potential in small classes. It also aims to help all pupils to develop their individual personalities within the framework of a stimulating environment. It sets out to encourage pupils to meet new challenges with confidence, within an ethos that is based on Christian principles. The school aims are also expressed in its most recent prospectus: 'It is hoped that education can be fun as well as serious and that there can be real joy in learning.'
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school apart from the Nursery classes which are called the Kindergarten.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The educational experience provided is distinctive, varied and of a high standard. It is based upon the subjects of the National Curriculum, with significant enhancements to it such as French and Latin. The curriculum has been improved since the last inspection and is being improved further still. The educational experience provides a well-rounded education which is consistent with the school's stated aim to provide a stimulating environment. It is successful in encouraging pupils' all-round development and their acquisition of skills.
- 2.2 The school's use of time emphasises work in English and mathematics, with science, physical education (PE), games, languages, art and music receiving a balanced allocation of time. The curriculum is spread soundly across other subjects and through the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. The school makes excellent provision for children in the Kindergarten and Reception classes in a richly integrated curriculum.
- 2.3 The curriculum is organised appropriately to match the ages and interests of pupils. Pupils in Year 8 who have attended Rose Hill for many years spoke positively to inspectors of the range and depth of subjects they have learned about. Pupils who joined the school in Year 7 also spoke highly of its curricular provision.
- 2.4 Curriculum policies and schemes of work are used for all subjects and provide guidance on the objectives of learning. Excellent examples of these were seen in French and mathematics but they were less thorough in some other subjects. The latter schemes are in the process of being improved this term. The school follows Common Entrance (CE) syllabuses. Pupils are taught in sets for English and mathematics from Year 1 upwards. The provision for relationships education is within the context of loving, stable relationships, mainly in science and personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons.
- 2.5 The school provides a broad extra-curricular programme, which ranges from music, drama and sport to clubs for science and the classics. Successful dramatic and musical performances feature prominently throughout the school year. Sport is one of the school's great strengths. Many pupils participate in swimming, athletics, hockey, rugby, football, tennis, cricket, netball and golf. The school is built on ground that was once a golf course and it hosts its own version of the Masters Golf Tournament. Pupils of all abilities have the chance to represent the school in matches and enjoy their successes.
- 2.6 The excellent music provision is enhanced by visiting music teachers for a wide variety of instruments. A quartet of accomplished violin players achieved highly in an observed assembly.
- 2.7 Lord Baden Powell, the founder of the scouting movement, was educated at Rose Hill in Victorian times, and the school retains a strong affiliation with that organisation. Brownies are particularly well represented. Many pupils are involved in at least one scouting activity. The curriculum is further enhanced by visiting speakers and educational visits. The school holds a very popular French Day annually, which is enjoyed by staff and pupils.
- 2.8 The school's ethos is one where pupils are often at the forefront of activities. Highly professional photographs of many pupils involved in a wide range of academic, creative and sporting activities are displayed in many parts of the school. Eye-catching displays of pupils' work illustrate their achievements and learning. These images and displays combine to give a convincing picture of the complete involvement of many in school life.

- 2.9 The curriculum successfully helps pupils to hone their literacy skills in all year groups. The recent introduction of a phonics scheme has boosted the provision for literacy. Literacy teaching is also enhanced via a new main school library and a pre-prep drama space. These have been developed since the last inspection. They are used extensively by pupils and give excellent opportunities for drama, movement, music and free reading. Pupils enjoy imaginative opportunities to improve their speaking and listening skills. In a pre-prep assembly, pupils listened carefully and spoke articulately about their work on Scotland. Excellent provision for French and Latin contributes significantly to the linguistic curriculum. Pupils have plentiful opportunities to consolidate their numeracy skills in mathematics and science.
- 2.10 Pupils are very well prepared for new learning as they move from one stage of their education to the next. Comprehensive records are passed from year to year throughout the school and each pupil's progress is discussed by current and future teachers.
- 2.11 Pupils in the pre-prep department enjoy meaningful links with the main school. They attend special assemblies and are sometimes taught by main school teachers. There is an impressive, pupil-friendly, Year 3 information handbook provided to familiarise pupils with procedures in the main school. Helpful links also exist between the main school and receiving senior schools. Pupils visit their chosen senior school and the headmaster and his colleagues meet with the heads of those schools.
- 2.12 Pupils requiring learning support are well catered for. Their needs are identified early and a structured approach is adopted to deal with any difficulties they encounter. Staff are provided with individual education plans for the pupils they teach. However, these are not always taken into enough account in the planning of lessons in the main school. The management of learning support in the pre-prep department and in the main school provides coherent, extra support for groups of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD), either within the class or in small group sessions.
- 2.13 Staff are aware of pupils who are gifted, talented or able and support them in sport, art and music. The opportunities for challenging them further in other subjects are provided by virtue of being in the top set and in small groups at the upper end of the school.
- 2.14 A useful document, Every Child Matters, provides a profile of every pupil and this enables teachers to monitor pupils' involvement in music, drama, sport and the responsibilities they undertake.
- 2.15 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.16 Pupils achieve good standards in their learning and achievement by the time they are in Year 6 or Year 8. These standards have been maintained well since the last inspection and are in line with the school's aim for every pupil to achieve full academic potential. Pupils are well grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding across a range of subjects and activities. They show an ability to think and act critically. There are no significant differences in the relative attainments of different groups of pupils.
- 2.17 By the end of the Foundation Stage, pupils' literacy achievements are above average. They read and write with great confidence and enjoyment. They communicate well during work and play activities and have a broad knowledge of the world around them. Pupils' written work is detailed, well presented and fluently expressive. For example, Year 2 pupils described a visit to Tonbridge Castle evocatively. In Years 1 to 8, pupils show excellent

- literacy skills in a wide range of lessons. Their speaking and listening skills are of high quality. They listen with care and speak with clarity and confidence. They read with enjoyment.
- 2.18 Pupils acquire accomplished numeracy skills and scientific knowledge. Their application of mathematical and scientific concepts is excellent and they build on the strong foundations laid down in the pre-prep department. Pupils articulate their mathematical ideas well verbally, and show very effective reasoning skills. They argue cogently and possess the ability to think for themselves.
- 2.19 Pupils' skills in other languages are also strong. This was particularly apparent in a Year 8 French lesson, where pupils applied their skills in a role play exercise to convincing effect. Pupils make capable use of ICT, when given the opportunity to do so. They achieve highly in their independent project work in subjects such as geography and history. Some of these show evidence of ICT for research and also for presentation. Pupils develop proficient knowledge and skills in many aspects of ICT and use them effectively in ICT lessons.
- 2.20 The school prepares them well for the next stage in their education and they almost always succeed in gaining entry into their first choice of senior school. Individuals gain scholarships in music, art, sport and drama, as well as academic awards. An impressive total of ten scholarships were awarded in 2007.
- 2.21 Pupils do very well in CE and 11+ examinations. Results in national tests at the age of eleven are high in relation to the pupils' abilities. Over the last three years, they have been far above the national average for maintained primary schools. Pupils make considerable progress since their entry to the school. Those that enter Year 7 settle quickly and achieve significant benefit from their learning at Rose Hill.
- 2.22 Pupils excel in a wide range of other areas. These include sport, where they achieve high standards throughout the school. Their achievements are often outstanding and successes extend to county, national and international level. Musical and artistic attainments are of high quality, with strong individual and group performances, in examinations, local festivals and other events. Pupils perform well in drama and musical events.
- 2.23 Pupils' attitudes to work and study are highly conducive to learning. They have a positive attitude to their learning and speak well of the many subjects they enjoy. As a result, their behaviour is generally good and occasionally outstanding. They often meet the school's high expectations and many are courteous and show respect for staff and each other. They settle quickly and work conscientiously on set tasks. They enjoy many of the classroom activities, and show perseverance in achieving their aims. In class work they relate very well with each other and their teachers. Their attendance levels are excellent and they are punctual.
- 2.24 By the time they reach Year 8, pupils are skilful in note-taking. Most are efficient in organising files so as to assist revision and present project work well. Pupils develop well in their ability to work both independently and cooperatively. They are noticeably tolerant of each other and are shrewd in assessing themselves.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.25 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent at all stages of school life. This is an improvement that has happened since the last inspection. The importance of personal development is integral to the school's ethos, which strongly supports pupils' growth in confidence and self-esteem. The school fully meets its aims to help all pupils to develop their individual personalities within the framework of a stimulating environment. It also fully meets its aim to encourage children to meet new challenges with confidence, within an ethos that is based on Christian principles.
- 2.26 Pupils are very spiritually aware. In this they follow the spirit of the school's motto: "Nisi Dominus Frustra" (Without God our efforts are in vain). Pupils' spiritual development is evident in school assemblies, music, drama, art, creative development, sporting events, academic studies and discussions with inspectors. The school helps to promote a strong sense of identity and self-worth. Pupils are helped to shaping their personal values and beliefs. They show respect for themselves and others and this is developed further through a clear pastoral system from Kindergarten to Year 8. Pupils fulfil the school's aims for them, spiritually, morally, socially and culturally and the school has made considerable progress since its last inspection.
- 2.27 The school's Christian ethos is shown through pupils' respect for others on residential visits. They enjoy good opportunities to develop self-esteem, pride in their achievements and appreciation of those of others through class work, musical and dramatic performances, sport and assemblies. Teachers have a clear understanding and knowledge of the school's aims and show a strong sense of respect for pupils' efforts, feelings, attitudes and values.
- 2.28 School assemblies embody a Christian ethos and wholesome moral values. Both teachers and pupils lead prayers, and also say grace at lunchtimes. Personal achievement is encouraged in a nurturing way, as happened when a Year 2 pupil played a violin solo during a pre-prep assembly. Pupils have reasonable opportunities for thought and reflection. They show compassion for others and display a sense of community in working and learning together for a common goal.
- 2.29 Pupils develop well morally and make sensible decisions about the principles which distinguish right from wrong. They are aware of and follow the school's behavioural code of conduct. Pupils display confidence and rational insight in making informed decisions in lessons, circle time discussions and school council meetings. They discuss issues relevant to themselves and their school and gain an insight into the value of citizenship by being democratically represented or by presenting the views of their peers to different audiences.
- 2.30 Most pupils receive both religious studies and PSHE lessons on a regular basis and debate moral issues often. Ethical issues are also raised in these and other lessons. Older pupils willingly participate in social projects both locally and in the Third World. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were strongly supportive of the attitudes and values promoted by the school. The qualities of kindness and consideration for others embodied by the school's leaders are also apparent in its wider community.
- 2.31 Pupils speak enthusiastically of enjoying receiving acclaim for sensible, courteous and responsible behaviour. Some take the initiative to organise or participate in charity fundraising for those less fortunate than themselves.
- 2.32 Pupils' social development is strong and well-organised. In their social development, pupils accept advanced levels of responsibility from an early age. They take their jobs seriously and carry them out efficiently. They show consideration and care for each other and respect

for form and house captains. The code of conduct is displayed, understood and acted upon, both inside and outside classrooms.

- 2.33 Pupils show a high level of social awareness and have a house system which helps give a positive sense of community. They are able to identify, describe and understand a range of public institutions in the United Kingdom and the world. They are confident in their knowledge of the various services in the community along with a developing awareness of global warming and the need for sustainable development.
- 2.34 Pupils meet in the school council very regularly and it helps act as an agent for change. It gives those who participate, the experience of working responsibly for the common good. Members of staff provide excellent role models for pupils in the quality of relationships they foster and by the way that they work well together. At mealtimes, teachers sit and eat with pupils; they join in orchestras, choirs, plays and other school events. They give tirelessly of their time for extra-curricular activities and they willingly help pupils with problems.
- 2.35 Pupils have a sharply defined awareness of their own and other cultures and faiths. The school displays, for example in the pre-prep department, show that they experience a diverse range of cultural experiences. Pupils are aware of the cultural differences between different groups of people and respect and value those differences. Examples of many cultural studies and events are published in the outstanding school magazine and a well-designed web site. Pupils throughout the school benefit from a well-organised programme of cultural visits in this country and abroad. Cultural development provides pupils with an excellent appreciation for their own and other cultures and faiths in the world.
- 2.36 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.37 The overall quality of teaching is good and this supports the school's aim to help pupils to enjoy their learning. Teaching enables all pupils to learn and make strong progress as at the time of the last inspection. The great majority of teaching is good or better and about one lesson in six has outstanding features. The teaching of literacy has been improved since the last inspection through emphasis on understanding the sounds of letters.
- 2.38 Lessons are usually well planned, suitably varied and feature in-depth subject knowledge. A broad range of teaching styles and methods is employed. Teachers manage the demands of mixed-ability teaching well. Pupils with LDD receive skilful help with particularly strong support in the pre-prep department.
- 2.39 Teachers have a close rapport with pupils so that there are few discipline problems and pupils behave responsibly. Where teaching is strong, and this is often, it is characterised by open-ended questioning techniques and thoughtful feedback. Where teaching has shortcomings, in a small minority of lessons, it features unrealistic planning, slow pace or unsure time management.
- 2.40 Imaginative and stimulating teaching occurs throughout the school. In art, Year 7 children have visited the Tate Modern to look at 'pop art' techniques, prior to making ceramic matchboxes. This extends their knowledge of Oldenburg's work. Teachers promote pupils' creative thinking well.

- 2.41 In the many good lessons, teachers exploit opportunities to extend the scope of learning. They emphasise important points well and encourage pupils to carry out their own research. In the pre-prep department, pupils carry out practical activities using sophisticated, multi-media digital technology. Latin classes in Year 8 enjoy playing digital word games. Lessons run punctually despite a densely packed day and a swift succession of activities.
- 2.42 Teachers often show outstanding subject knowledge in a range of subjects. This is often combined with great enthusiasm for their subject. Well-organised and exciting teaching includes a clear demonstration and explanation of expectations combined with opportunities to experiment and improvise. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace in an atmosphere that encourages pupils to participate in discussion and to express their ideas confidently.
- 2.43 A wide range of appropriate resources, both in quantity and quality, is used throughout the school to support teaching and learning. This is exemplified in the excellently equipped main school library, the outstanding resources in the pre-prep department and the many first-class resources for subjects such as science, ICT, games and PE. Teachers use a sufficient variety of textbooks and practical resources skilfully.
- 2.44 Teachers often show a sympathetic understanding of pupils' aptitudes and needs because they know their pupils well. Their use of ICT across the curriculum as a learning tool has improved greatly since the last inspection but is still not fully developed. Interactive whiteboards are used increasingly as an aid to teaching but much less so for learning. Teachers provide a number of opportunities for pupils to work with digital multi-media. Further training in the use of ICT to augment learning across the curriculum is planned.
- 2.45 The school has developed a clear, well-structured system of assessing pupils' work, which helps teachers to know their pupils' strengths and identify areas for development. Foundation Stage profiles, closely linked to the six areas of learning, are used constructively to help the next teachers in planning what to teach. These benchmarks are extended during Year 1, when pupils undertake national assessments in reading and writing.
- 2.46 In the main school, standardised test results are monitored by the director of studies, and compared with examples of pupils' class work and interim assessments of performance. Subject departments collate and analyse test results to monitor pupils' progress carefully. They then use these to place pupils in sets based on ability. Any concerns about individual performances or signs of quick progress are followed up quickly. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is helpful and has improved considerably following high-quality in-service training.
- 2.47 All staff maintain accurate and detailed records of pupils' attainment in class and homework. This was observed, for example, in discrete ICT lessons, where pupils' work was assessed by computers and these assessments were moderated and monitored by the teacher.
- 2.48 Senior teachers make use of the data obtained from the results of standardised tests and examinations to monitor pupils' progress throughout the school. These results are increasingly analysed by departments to help teachers identify how to improve learning further. They also use the data to help identify pupils who require further support for their learning. In some subjects, pupils set their own targets in discussion with teachers. These aims are recorded and reviewed regularly.
- 2.49 Teachers encourage pupils to take joy in learning, one of the school's chief aims. They give their pupils much praise. This contributes to the strong relationships enjoyed in lessons and the positive atmosphere. In interviews, pupils of all ages felt that they could always ask for help and had no reservations in so doing.

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- 2.50 A thorough assessment system includes interim reports, which are sent home every half term. They supplement detailed termly reports and parental consultations. This system is rightly seen as an important motivational tool in raising pupils' achievement as well as providing parents with accurate on-going information.
- 2.51 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils

- 3.1 The provision of pastoral care, welfare, health and safety is an outstanding feature of the school as it was in the last inspection. Teachers care about pupils' wellbeing. The school is a welcoming place and in this it supports its aim to develop pupils' individual personalities and self-confidence. Members of its community take responsibility for each other.
- 3.2 Parents are very appreciative of the support that their children receive. In discussions with inspectors, pupils commented favourably on the school's 'friendly feel'. They feel that they are supported caringly in their learning and in their personal development. Staff understand their pupils' concerns very well and provide excellent support and guidance for them. Pupils are happy and secure. They know that they can approach members of staff for advice. Comments were made such as "When you are upset or having trouble with work everyone helps."
- 3.3 The formal structure of pastoral care is well organised. The scope and content of school policies to assist staff in their pastoral roles are comprehensive and cover the full age range. Detailed policies for pastoral care show a thoughtful and practical approach, clearly aligned to the school's aims. Further links are consolidated in the school's PSHE programme. This provides topics for class discussion such as friendship, respecting others, and teamwork, and these increase in complexity and sophistication as pupils mature.
- 3.4 Pupils' views are respected and discussed openly at school council meetings, which are often run independently of adults. The council's decisions and requests are well balanced to benefit all pupils at school. They are also sufficiently practical, such as putting on special charity events, or providing more games equipment, and they have often been implemented.
- 3.5 Pupils are cared for very well. Staff show patience and understanding and they focus on each child as an individual. Records of planned and incidental observations are regularly updated for all pupils.
- 3.6 From Kindergarten to Year 8, teachers' sound knowledge of their pupils and their genuine interest in them is enhanced by the recent adoption of the government's initiative Every Child Matters. A continuously updated record is kept in the staffroom and provides an immediate overview of each pupil's interests, commitments and involvement in school life.
- 3.7 Teachers' caring attitudes make an important contribution to their pupils' personal growth. Problems are usually quickly dealt with, in the first instance by the form teacher. Pupils responding to a pre-inspection questionnaire overwhelmingly agreed that "Teachers care if I am happy." They also felt overwhelmingly that "There is an adult I can turn to if I have a personal problem." These views are also borne out in discussion with them.
- 3.8 Similarly, responses to a recent parents' questionnaire indicated high levels of satisfaction with the concern the school shows for each child's well-being. Parents also use the homework diary as a useful means of quick communication with teachers. This is in addition to its main purpose of stating accurately and clearly what homework has been set.
- 3.9 The school greatly encourages self-discipline and courteous manners. Pupils are expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour and they do. Disciplinary action is non-punitive and pupils recognise it as fairly administered. Pupils get time to reflect on the reasons behind unkind words or actions.

- 3.10 Highly effective measures concerning anti-bullying procedures ensure that pupils are free to enjoy their time at school without fear. Pupils' overall attendance at school is excellent. They are encouraged to be positive about their own abilities and their contribution to the school community. Pupils say that bullying is rare. If it does occur, they are confident that staff deal with it appropriately.
- 3.11 Child protection measures are excellent. The school makes use of a comprehensive policy, and all staff are appropriately trained. The headmaster is the designated child protection officer (CPO) and the deputy headmaster is deputy CPO. There is also a governor with responsibility for its oversight. Although these procedures have not been tested in recent years the school is very well placed to deal sensitively with issues when they occur.
- 3.12 Emergency management policies and procedures are detailed and rigorous. Members of staff are trained in first aid techniques. Safety equipment is checked regularly and kept securely. Pupils who become unwell during the school day are looked after well by the school matron and administrative staff.
- 3.13 Risk assessments are undertaken regularly, with weekly minibus checks and site surveys which help to identify potential hazards. All activities, both on and off site, are informed by these detailed documents. Fire prevention measures are in order, and fire practices are held regularly.
- 3.14 Nutritious, tasty and well-balanced meals are provided for staff, pupils and visitors from other schools by in-house caterers. At lunchtimes, pupils enjoy choosing from a range of healthy, nutritious foods and learn to eat together with members of staff in a civilised way. They learn to live healthily not just at lunchtimes but also in sporting, scientific and ICT activities. Drug awareness and the dangers of smoking are also included within the PSHE programme.
- 3.15 The excellent health and safety arrangements provide a safe, healthy and caring environment for all pupils. The bursar's department reports every term to governors on all matters relating to health and safety and monitors these aspects conscientiously. This is with the support of the health and safety committee. This ensures that there is a proper trail of accountability through senior management to the governing council.
- 3.16 The school has appropriate and effective arrangements for maintaining an admission register and keeping registers of attendance in highly efficient computer systems. Registers are completed properly at the beginning of the school day and at the beginning of the afternoon session. If pupils' absence is unexplained, the school responds on the first day of such absence with careful enquiries to ascertain where they are.
- 3.17 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

- 3.18 The quality of the school's links with pupils' parents and the community is excellent and they have been improved since the last inspection. Parents are informed of school events, successes and issues via highly informative newsletters, a comprehensive website and a detailed annual magazine. Reports are sent home each term. These give information on the curriculum and the progress pupils make. They often give advice on how to improve. Parent consultations are also held twice yearly in the main school, and each term in the pre-prep.
- 3.19 Members of staff are contactable via email and weekly contact is made through the homework diary. These opportunities are much valued by parents. The system of form representatives provides a useful and constructive conduit for suggestions and concerns. The parents' association is a great asset to the school and its pupils, both in terms of fundraising, and also in providing opportunities for parents, pupils and teachers to mix socially.
- 3.20 Overall, the school is very responsive to parental expectations and concerns, and has commissioned outstandingly comprehensive surveys of their opinions. The great majority of parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's aims. The vast majority are well satisfied with the education and care their children receive and inspection evidence confirms their views. A small minority of parents raised concerns in their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire over the quality of the information provided to them. No evidence was found during the inspection to support these concerns. In fact, the quality of information has been greatly strengthened since the last inspection. This is with regard to the excellent scope of the school website and the outstanding quality of the school magazine. Formal parental complaints are rare, and are dealt with sensitively.
- 3.21 The school values its links with the local community and the wider world. The partnership with a local primary school is innovative. It benefits staff and pupils in both schools in terms of skills and facilities. Pupils visit and worship at the local church. The Brownie, Wolfcub and Rainbow groups are flourishing. Many pupils act as ambassadors in a wide range of activities, including support for a partner-school in Thailand.
- 3.22 The school is represented in a number of local events, including arts festivals, and Remembrance Sunday, and it regularly supports a range of local and international charities. School facilities and resources such as its minibus are freely available to local groups and organisations where possible. The school enjoys excellent relations with a number of senior schools receiving Rose Hill pupils.
- 3.23 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 Clear-sighted and effective governance has enabled the school to make substantial progress since its last inspection and to meet its aims successfully. The governing council is well led and its effectiveness is further ensured by governors' professional skills. Oversight of the school's financial affairs is particularly strong and that, combined with a firm assertion of its distinctive educational philosophy, has enabled it to establish a secure position from which to plan its future.
- 4.2 The governing council includes committees for staffing and the curriculum, public relations and finance and general purposes. This structure works well. It enables the management team to lead the school confidently, knowing that they have the full support of well-informed governors. Meetings are carefully recorded and governors have positive working relationships with members of staff. The governing council supports and challenges the school to follow best practice in all areas and makes an important contribution to its overall success.
- 4.3 Governors seek to strike an effective balance between being supportive and acting as 'critical friends'. They delegate full executive powers to the senior management team to manage the school. Governors are involved appropriately in strategic planning. They understand the school and its needs well. Strategic objectives are identified and appropriate actions taken. For example, a shortage of changing rooms, classroom and specialist spaces for music, art and drama was identified as a priority and the school is responding effectively by implementing a significant building programme.
- 4.4 Full governing council meetings and committee meetings take place at least termly and are well attended. Members of staff make presentations to governors from time to time about their subjects. A number of governors regularly attend school events, such as plays, concerts, sports fixtures and religious services. One governor has responsibility for the oversight of child protection matters, another for the provision of support for pupils with LDD, and another for health and safety issues.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.5 The overall quality of leadership and management is good and has improved since the last inspection. The school benefits from a clear and imaginative educational direction. The headmaster and the senior management team provide strong leadership and effective management. Their focused educational vision gives the school a dynamic sense of purpose and enables it to be highly successful in meeting its aims. The high calibre of leadership is borne out in such things as the high quality of the curriculum, the strength of teaching and the excellent pastoral care.
- 4.6 The leadership is characterised as caring, clear, innovative and businesslike. Key personnel with academic and pastoral responsibilities are fully involved. The leaders of the main school and the pre-prep department liaise often to ensure that school improvement is a continuous and corporate process. They show great care and commitment for pupils and staff and contribute to an ethos of mutual commitment and respect. Parents and pupils are strongly supportive of the school's ethos.

- 4.7 The school enjoys a happy, friendly, civilised and well-mannered ethos. Teachers ensure that pupils work and play in a disciplined and well-ordered community. The school's leaders are personally involved in teaching and learning and the staff has a blend of youth and experience.
- 4.8 The school development plan is a key element in school improvement and provides a specific and constructive map of its educational direction. The school derives its objectives for improvement from perceptive and accessible analysis of its strengths and weaknesses. Senior managers constantly analyse its strengths and needs for the future.
- 4.9 Subject leaders have striven to improve their subjects further. Some have developed and refined lucid policies, schemes of work and handbooks but few have developed effective action plans. Their leadership is often at least satisfactory and in some cases is much better than that. A few subjects are in need of urgent further development and newly appointed heads of department are setting about this with alacrity.
- 4.10 Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning are widespread and rigorous in manner. At times, however, they are not regular enough to ensure that all teaching is as good as it could be. The system to appraise the work of members of staff is appropriate but spread over too wide a timespan. Some job descriptions are sharply written and relevant but others are out-of-date and do not reflect what the post-holders actually do.
- 4.11 The school has a well-qualified, hardworking and loyal staff, both teaching and non-teaching. The arrangements for recruiting any adult who might have contact with pupils are rigorous and pay due regard to government safety guidelines. These arrangements include appropriate checks with the Criminal Records Bureau.
- 4.12 Generally, the school supports staff well through in-service training although more is needed in the use of ICT in other subjects. The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers but has no current teacher who is newly qualified. Appropriate induction and training arrangements are established for new or newly-qualified teachers, to help them, where appropriate, to achieve fully qualified status.
- 4.13 Members of staff are supported by clear and helpful policy documentation and guidelines. School administration is outstandingly well-organised and highly efficient and Rose Hill is smoothly run. The estate and premises are maintained well and cared for by a committed team of staff. The spacious grounds and accommodation are suitable for pupils' educational needs at every stage of their education. Catering staff provide cuisine of a high order. They all contribute positively to the school's ethos.
- 4.14 Financial management is of high quality. It is linked closely to the school's educational priorities. The headmaster, bursar and senior managers play a key part in securing excellent resources in many subjects and ambitious plans for its future development. Effective systems for the budgeting and monitoring of expenditure are in place.
- 4.15 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.16 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The school meets its aims and aspirations well. It is a happy, successful, thriving and popular school. It prepares its pupils well for the next stage in their lives and their wellbeing and their achievements are above average. The school is excellently led and provides a broad, varied and interesting educational experience. Pupils enjoy a very caring and happy ethos. They like and are proud of their school and enjoy learning there. Many parents are rightly pleased with the school's provision for their children and the school's links with them are outstanding. The quality of subject leadership varies from satisfactory to excellent. Some job descriptions are out-of-date and do not reflect what the post-holders actually do. The overall quality of teaching is good. Although the monitoring of its quality is rigorous it is not regular enough to ensure that all teaching meets that standard. In some subjects and year groups ICT is used well and often, but elsewhere its use is not consistent. Through accurate self-evaluation, the school has identified the need to ensure its use of ICT is improved and it has ambitious plans to invest further in its accommodation. It is aware that the monitoring and evaluation role of subject leaders is not yet fully effective in leading development forward.
- 5.2 The headmaster, senior managers and staff have improved standards and broadened the learning experience since the last inspection. The overall quality of leadership is good as is the quality of teaching. The school's leadership has been restructured effectively. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now outstanding. Pupils acquire well-rounded knowledge, understanding and skills and develop confidence and maturity in their personal lives. The school has made considerable improvements since its last inspection, particularly in the curriculum, which has for instance, been much enhanced in the pre-prep department. Curricular links between the main school and the pre-prep department have improved greatly. Resources, accommodation and facilities have also improved in many areas through a very expansive building development programme.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 All major aspects of the school are good and some are outstanding. In order to build further on the improvements made since the last inspection the school should:
1. clarify the roles of heads of department and refine subject planning;
 2. update all job descriptions in order to set regular and timely benchmarks for rigorous appraisal;
 3. use further the systems with which to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of teaching;
 4. develop further the use of ICT for learning across the curriculum.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 26th to 29th November 2007. The inspectors examined samples of work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, attended registration sessions and assemblies and visited the medical facilities. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed fully, and the inspectors examined a wide range of documentation made available by the school.

List of Inspectors

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mr Rob Isaac | Reporting Inspector |
| Mrs Claire Delo | Head of Department, IAPS school |
| Mrs Heather Friell | Headmistress, IAPS school |
| Mr Richard Johnson | Deputy Headmaster, IAPS school |
| Mr Peter Wells | Headmaster, IAPS school |